

FAMILY ACTIVITIES FOR LENT

Grow closer to Christ as a family this Lent! St. Stephen the Martyr Home & School Association's 'Be The Light' committee compiled the below reflections and activities. We hope they help your family truly enter into the Lenten season and grow in relationship with the Lord. Resources mentioned throughout this guide are available at school.stephen.org/family-lent-activities.

Sacred Sundays

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God." - Exodus 20: 8-11

- Attend [Sunday Mass](#) as a family.
- After Mass, discuss the readings. A great resource that includes daily readings, guided prayers, confession guides and more is the [Laudate](#) app.
- Read or learn about a saint at franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day.
- Relax, share a family meal, play a game, sport, enjoy nature or watch a movie together.
- "Waste time with Jesus" in Adoration in our Worship Space from 4 - 5 PM or watch via live stream on [Facebook](#).
- [Pray a rosary](#) (or a start with a decade) with your family.
- Sundays are considered feast days in our faith and they are joyous, celebratory days, even in Lent. We can take a little break from our Lenten sacrifices and sufferings on Sundays and celebrate Christ's victory over the grave!
- Rest from unnecessary work and shopping.

Merciful Mondays

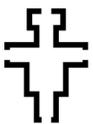
"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect." - Romans 12:2

- Bring the good news and the message of God's merciful love to everyone in life! One way is to simply [practice the virtues](#) of patience, generosity, peacefulness, self-control, kindness, love, respect, and service, within your own family.
- Visit Formed.org and explore content from more than 60 organizations that help families explore their faith! Lots of kid-friendly resources as well as adult/family content.
- [Hallow Kids](#) is a prayer app that, in addition to providing daily reflections, guided prayers and more for adults, also provides kid-oriented prayers and stories to help focus your children on God.
- Listen to a Podcast. The [Bible in a Year](#) podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz is a great easy and accessible way to walk through Salvation History, which is OUR story too!
- Meditate on scripture. We recommend Matthew and Mark which include Christ's passion.
- Learn more about Mercy on Fr. Mike Schmitz's YouTube channel.
- Pray the [Divine Mercy Chaplet](#), often prayed at 3 PM daily, the hour of Jesus's death.

Totally Unplug Tuesdays

"Thou shall not have any other gods before me." - Exodus 20:3

- Eliminate social media one hour before bedtime and after you wake up! Use this time to connect with the Lord, praying for those friends and family in your life.
- Keep your phone in a drawer or out of sight. Give yourself only 45 minutes to check messages/email, social media, etc.
- Turn off all "push" notifications. Use your uninterrupted, unplugged time to focus on your faith family, and friends.
- Read a book, take a walk, plan a trip, etc. Explore God's beauty in nature, and enjoy the sunrises and sunsets, created by HIM!
- Take advantage of screen time settings and set a weekly goal in your family to spend 10 minutes less time on your phone each day and by the end of Lent you will have saved an hour a day to spend together!



St. Stephen the Martyr
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Encounter, Know, Proclaim



Worship Wednesdays

"To call yourself a child of God is one thing. To be called a child of God by those who watch your life is another thing altogether."

- Max Lucado

- Attend a weekday Mass at 6:30 AM or 8:15 AM (or join remotely via live stream).
- Pray for our RCIA candidates that will enter the Catholic church this Lenten season.
- Visit Jesus in the daily mass chapel 24/7. There you will find the answer to all life's problems - just sit and listen!
- Have your kids take turns leading night prayer. Keep a log of whom you are praying for or dedicate a day to praying for each family member. Taking time to pray as a family, is one of the best gifts you can give your child. It might be tricky at first, but don't give up. Don't be afraid to try and try again. Devote a special prayer corner in the house that has a sacred space with a bible, holy water, Lenten reflections, etc. Make it your own!
- Spend time outdoors after school with your children to enjoy God's creation. You could choose to visit the [Cloisters on the Platte](#) or visit the [Holy Family Shrine to walk The Way of the Cross trail](#). Visit their websites for hours.
- Read the daily mass readings as a family at breakfast or dinner. The [Laudate](#) app is a great resource!
- Do an [examination of conscience](#) and reflect on our actions in light of our faith.

Tune In Thursdays

"Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you, and still more will be added to you."

- Mark 4:24

- Turn on a Catholic or Christian radio station in our local area:
 - Spirit 102.7 FM or KVSS [Spirit Catholic Radio](#): This station has powerful programming with amazing guest speakers
 - 88.1 FM [K LOVE](#): This station has positive and encouraging music and words and stories from listeners
 - 100.7fm [KGBI](#): Listen to powerful stories of God's love through others, as well as, contemporary Christian music
- Listen to a Podcast
 - The [Catholic Sprouts](#) podcast is a daily short podcast that tells stories of faith in bite-sized ways your children can understand.
 - [Saint Stories for Kids](#) has short podcast episodes on the lives of the saints, made especially to inspire children to dream big!

Fasting Fridays

"Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the good Samaritan who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him." - Pope Francis

As a family, choose something you can fast from together. Here are some ideas:

- Fast from meat on Fridays (age 14+) and join our Parish Family at our [St. Stephen Knights of Columbus Fish Fry Fridays](#).
- Fast from sibling or spouse quarreling and instead join together in a family game or activity.
- Fast from screen time (video games, TV, phones) and instead go for a family walk and pick up litter along the way.
- Fast from a favorite snack or sweet and instead donate one to a Food Pantry.
- Fast from hurtful words/gossip and instead go out of your way to share God's love with a difficult person in your life.
- Fast from anger or annoyance and instead practice patience.
- Fast from words and spend time contemplating the Passion of Christ. Join your student via [live stream](#) every Friday during Lent at 2:30 PM as the school participates in the Stations of the Cross or join your parish family Fridays at 6 PM in the church.
- Fast from creature comfort (go without a hot shower, extra blanket, snack) and then find a way to share one of those comforts with those in need (i.e. Donate blankets, clothing, funds, or other items to a charity).
- Fast from complaints and make time together to start a gratitude journal, acknowledging all your family has to be grateful for.
- Fast from worrying, stress, and pressure. Spend time in prayer together to surrender these concerns to God.
- Fast from busyness, slow down, and choose a time block in your day for your family to devote to the Lord.
- Fast from putting yourself first, and choose a way your family can serve others on Saturday (or any day of the week).

Service Saturdays

"Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." - Saint Pope John Paul II

- Explore opportunities to give back to our parish, school, and community: visit [stephen.org/connect](#) or [school.stephen.org/volunteer](#) to learn how your family can serve.
- Other local service opportunities: ABIDE offers Second Saturday Serve. [shareomaha.org/second-Saturday-serve-volunteer](#) or Open Door Mission: [opendoormission.org](#).
- If you can't get out in the community, consider how you can serve others at home: family chores, shoveling snow, doing the dishes, doing laundry, helping a sibling, taking out the trash, serving a neighbor in need (shop for them or provide lawn care) or share your talents of reading or playing music with someone.
- Write notes or cards to the elderly in our community (CountryHouse Residence or Walnut Grove Assisted Living, etc.).
- Thank the frontline workers during this pandemic with a card or letter/treats.
- Call or video chat with a grandparent or elderly you know.